

Keats Shelley Memorial Association
Bulletin, Number XIV, 1963

With best wishes from
Julian Brown
188 Cromwell Rd
2 June 1966

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SOME SHELLEY FORGERIES BY 'MAJOR BYRON'

by T. J. Brown

THE forged letters of P. B. Shelley which are the subject of this note came to the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, through the National Register of Archives, from the Estate of Sir John C. E. Shelley-Rolls, 6th Bart., who died in 1951.

All these forgeries are the work of Major George Gordon de Luna Byron, as he called himself (his real name may have been De Gibler). The best collection of the Major's work is in British Museum, Additional MS. 19377, which contains many of his forged Byron and Shelley letters, but none of his few Keats forgeries. The general appearance of the handwriting and the layout of the letters on the page are exactly the same in these letters and in the British Museum Shelley forgeries. Thanks to the late Seymour de Ricci's careful handlist of Shelley's genuine and forged letters¹, and thanks to Mr. Theodore G. Ehrsam's exciting account of Major Byron's all-too-successful career as a forger², the main lines of the history of these particular letters is easy to establish. What I have not tried to do is to establish the exact relationship between the texts of certain of these forgeries and the texts of the genuine letters on which they are based, and the texts of other forgeries of them produced by Major Byron; or to discover the sources used by the Major when composing those forgeries which apparently do not correspond to a genuine original.

Major Byron—I shall follow Mr. Ehrsam's account of him³—came to London from the U.S.A. in 1844. Claiming to be the child of Lord Byron and a Portuguese lady, he wrote to a number of his 'father's' friends with requests for money and for the loan of materials for a projected biography of the poet, part of which was eventually published in New York in 1849⁴. Within a few years of his arrival in England he was selling Byron forgeries, through his wife, to a bookseller in Pall Mall, William White⁵; and by 1845 he was in touch with Mary Shelley, mostly through Thomas Hookham, jnr., and was apparently selling her forged copies, and genuine originals, of letters from Shelley to her⁶. He seems to have acquired, from one Madocks, who had been the Shelleys' landlord at Marlow

¹ *A Bibliography of Shelley's Letters, Published and Unpublished* (privately printed, 1927).

² *Major Byron: the incredible Career of a Literary Forger* (1951).

³ Ehrsam, pp. 9-113.

⁴ Ehrsam, pp. 65-74.

⁵ Ehrsam, pp. 51-2.

⁶ Ehrsam, pp. 19-31. *The Letters of Mary W. Shelley*, ed. F. L. Jones (1944), vol. II, pp. 263-70, 294-6.

before they left for Italy in 1818, the famous 'Marlow box' of letters, which Madocks had kept ever since as security for arrears of rent⁷.

As far as I can see, none of the fifteen forgeries in question here was sold directly to Mary Shelley, although Nos. 1-4 in the list which follows were bought for her at auction before her death on February 1, 1851. All except No. 16 (No. 15 in the list, as we shall see in a moment, is an innocent copy of a genuine letter) can be identified as lots in two of the three sales at auction into which the bookseller William White inserted many of his purchases from the Major's wife.

The first of these, the sale of 'the valuable collection of autograph letters formed by the late Charles Hodges, Esq. (formerly of Frankfort)' began at Puttick and Simpson's on December 18, 1848⁸. Lots 116-119 were Byron letters, and lot 390 was some verse by Keats: all four lots seem to have emanated from the Major. Lots 724-6, 728-31 were Shelley letters, while lot 727 was a fragment of 'An Ode for Music', seemingly genuine, which is now MS. Montagu d.18, ff. 90-91 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Lots 726 and 728 went to Sir Thomas Phillipps and were withdrawn as forgeries from his sale on July 15, 1891. Lots 724-5, 729-30 are our Nos. 1-4 in the list below. They were bought by Evans, apparently for Mary Shelley, from whom they passed to her son, Sir Percy Florence Shelley, and so by inheritance to Sir John Shelley-Rolls. Lot 731, also bought by Evans, may possibly be identical with our No. 11 (see below). Nos. 1-2 and 4 are not included by Roger Ingpen in his edition of Shelley's *Letters* which forms vols. VIII-X of the Julian Edition of the *Complete Works* (London, 1926-9).

Nos. 1-4, from the sale of December 18, 1848.

1 (ff. 1-2). Lot 724 in the 1848 sale (De Ricci, pp. 94-5, 293). Two conjoint leaves (1½ pp. written), 242 × 192 mm., watermarked with a fleur-de-lys. Apollo seal in black wax. *Begins and ends as follows*: Field Place, Sept. 3. 1812 | Dear Edward, | I was wondering at the long intermission | of your letters . . . directing your servant to deliver them— | With the hope of hearing soon from you I am | yours ever and truly | Percy B Shelley | Edward Graham, Esqre | Vine Street, | Piccadilly, | London. The recipient was meant to be Edward Fergus Graham. Comparison of the letter with De Ricci's quotations at pp. 94-5 confirms his surmise that this letter is the one partly printed by Dowden, as a genuine letter of September 3, 1810, in his *Life* (1886), vol. I, pp. 53-4 and *Errata*, and exposed as a forgery in 1889.

2 (ff. 3-4). Lot 725 in the 1848 sale (De Ricci, pp. 94, 293). Two conjoint leaves (4 pp. written), 201 × 159 mm., watermarked with Britannia within a crowned oval.

⁷ Ehrensam, pp. 57-9. *Mary Shelley's Journal*, ed. F. L. Jones (1947), p. 182 and n. 37.

⁸ Ehrensam, pp. 53-60.

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This plate is really of No. 11, f. 21v (see p. 52)

For unknown to me can never pass away is suspended —
perhaps on the issue of this trial — & get cheer up
my own beloved Mary. I have some friends here. I am
not, as might have happened once, to be oppressed &
crushed in secrecy & solitude. Depend too, on the at-
tention & caution to be used on my part. I am
& The original letter ends here & bears no signature J. S.

Shelley's genuine letter to Mary, January 11, 1817, Oxford Bodleian Library, M.S. Shelley adds. b.2, f.87.

(By permission of the Curators)

This copy is the
original of the
Shelley plate

87
get cheer up my own beloved Mary. I have
from friends here. I am not, as might
have happened me, to be depressed & crushed
in secrecy & solitude. Depend too, on the
almost forgiving but & caution to be used on
my part. I am to attend a consultation
of counsels early on Monday morning.

— How is sweetest babe? How do his
fair blue eyes look to day? How his
ten clerdy for me.

How is poor Sam? Give my love to his
and send her that I tell her the same.

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Begins and ends as follows: Field place | August 8—1810 | Dear Hezekiah, | I agree with you—Without | expression, the most beautiful features become | tame & insipid . . . I shall expect to hear a | full account of all your proceedings. Write | soon. I am | Yours ever | [*Signature cut out*]. Again to Edward Fergus Graham (cf. De Ricci, p. 86 for the Major's use of the name Hezekiah).

3 (f. 5). Lot 729 in the 1848 sale (De Ricci, pp. 245-6). One leaf of laid paper (1 p. written), 180 × 152 mm. *Begins and ends as follows:* Thus it is—my letters are full of money, | whilst my being overflows with unbounded | love . . . You alone reconcile me | to myself and to my beloved hopes | Goodnight my excellent love | my own Mary | P B Shelley.

The text of this letter to Mary corresponds to the ending of the genuine letter in Bodleian Library, MS. Shelley C. i, ff. 122-3 (Ingpen, vol. IX, no. CCXLVII, pp. 108-9), a copy of which was lot 1198 in the 1851 sale (No. 10 below). No. 3 and No. 10 are evidently not, as De Ricci supposed, identical; but it remains possible that No. 3 was sold again at Puttick and Simpson's on December 17, 1849, lot 97 (De Ricci, p. 247).

4 (ff. 6-7). Lot 730 in the 1848 sale. Two conjoint leaves of bluish wove paper (4 pp. written), 203 × 168 mm. *Begins and ends as follows:* London, Jan 12. 1817 | My dear Sir, | I have just received the Masters | report on the subject of my children which | I am sorry to say is against me . . . have we not a measure | for the value of the Doctor's eulogies on Mr Kendall? | Believe me ever yours very truly | (I enclose the Master's report) P B Shelley.

The recipient was no doubt meant to be P. W. Longdill, Shelley's solicitor. De Ricci (p. 169) castigates both the known letters to Longdill as forgeries. They were lots 1173, 1177 in the 1851 sale (see below) and are now in B.M., Add. MS. 19377, ff. 113-14, 119-20. The latter is dated January 17, 1817. Both were printed in Moxon's *Letters of Shelley* (1852), pp. 75-7, 89-95.

The next sale to which White contributed examples of the Major's work was that of 'the Interesting Collection of Autograph Letters of the late George Morgan Smith, Esq.', which began at Puttick and Simpson's on July 9, 1849⁹. Lots 63 and 65 were Byron MSS.; lots 195-6 were Keats letters. The Shelley material was all letters this time (lots 430-9), and with two exceptions (lots 431, 438) it was bought in by White, to reappear in the last of the three sales which he exploited in this way, when it was bought by Moxon (see below).

On May 12, 1851, Sotheby and Wilkinson began to sell 'the very interesting collection of Autograph Letters, Historical Documents, and Manuscripts, the

⁹ Ehram, pp. 63-5.

property of an eminent collector' (i.e. John Wilks, M.P. for Boston, Lincs.)¹⁰. Lots 1121-59 were 'Books from the Library of Lord Byron', with 'autograph' inscriptions; lots 1160-6 were 'Autograph Letters of John Keats, poet, deceased'; and lots 1167-1203 were 'Unpublished Letters in the Autograph of Percy Bysshe Shelley, poet, deceased, 1821'. Lots 1167-89 were bought by Shelley's publisher, Edward Moxon, and issued by him in 1852 as *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, with an Introductory Essay by Robert Browning*. By February 23, 1852, Francis Turner Palgrave had noticed that one of the letters was based on an article by his father, Sir Francis, of 1840. The fat was now in the fire¹¹. Moxon returned lots 1167-89 to White, and Sir John Murray, also, returned a number of Byron letters which he had bought privately. On March 4, 1853, after a long and scandalous debate in the press, White gave these forged Shelley and Byron letters to the British Museum, where they are preserved as Add. MS. 19377, to which I referred at the beginning of this note. Lot 1190, a letter now in the New York Public Library¹², and lots 1191-2, two pieces of literary MS., went to various buyers. The remaining Shelley letters, lots 1193-1203, all addressed to Mary, were bought by Hookham, at £57. 15. 0, for Sir Percy and Lady Shelley; and all but one of them (lot 1201, about which I shall have more to say in a moment) are identical with Nos. 5-14 in the list below.

Nos. 5-14, from the sale of May 12, 1851

5 (ff. 8-9). Lot 1193 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 245). Two conjoint leaves (2½ pp. written), 231 × 187 mm., watermarked with Britannia (?) within a crowned oval and the date 1814. Armorial seal in red wax. *Begins and ends as follows*: Wednesday. 4 o'clock. | My sweetest love, | The account of your adventure di | verted me extremely; for I am always pleased when | you seem so; . . . Adieu, my life, my love. | P. B. Shelley. | Mary. | London Coffee House.

Nos. 5-9 are not printed by Ingpen and none of them reads like a genuine letter of Shelley's. All are clearly meant to suggest his genuine letters to Mary of late October and early November 1814, printed by Ingpen in vol. IX, Nos. CCXXXVIII-CCXLVIII, pp. 97-109. The forger had evidently seen some or all of these genuine letters, from which he took the references to the London Coffee House; but his dating of No. 6—January 25—shows that he did not know when they were written. One of Lady Shelley's inscriptions on the wrapper (No. 20 below) which contained Nos. 5-9 in 1963 states that these four letters are based on letters of William Godwin's.

¹⁰ Ehram, pp. 76-88.

¹¹ Ehram, pp. 88-105.

¹² De Ricci, p. 37.

1822

6 (ff. 10-11). Lot 1194 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 245). Two conjoint leaves (2 $\frac{3}{4}$ pp. written), 201-165 mm., apparently watermarked 1814. Armorial seal in dark red wax. *Begins and ends as follows*: Friday, Jan. 25th | 8 o'clock. | My dearest love, | I rather passed than spent the day— | before I could venture to go to the L. Coffee H.— | ... your own | Shelley. | For | Mary | London Coffee House.

7 (ff. 12-13). Lot 1195 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 245). Two conjoint leaves (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ pp. written), 224×182 mm., watermarked with a shield bearing a posthorn and surmounted by a crown, with the letter S (?) below. Apollo seal in black wax. *Begins and ends as follows*: My own Mary, | I received yours, & hope my last letter will | sufficiently explain the mistake ... Sincerely and affectionately | yours | P. B. Shelley. | For | Mary. |

8 (ff. 14-15). Lot 1196 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 245). Two conjoint leaves of wove paper (3 pp. written), 241×203 mm. *Begins and ends as follows*: Monday, 11 o'clock. | My dearest Mary, | What a miserable world!—as it | is & will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich that | it may be in one's power to do good ... Console yourself—land- | lady—laundress—milkman &c. shall be paid—and | "Smellie" released from durance vile.—In the meanwhile | take this kiss from your affectionate | P. B. Shelley. | For | Mary.

9 (ff. 16-17). Lot 1197 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 245). Two conjoint leaves of wove paper (3 pp. written), 241×203 mm. Apollo seal in black wax. *Begins and ends as follows*: Thursday morning. | I have a great mind, dear Mary, if I thought | it would vex you, not to write to you this | month ... send a line to | the L. Coffee H. for your own | P. B. Shelley. | Mary.

10 (ff. 18-19). Lot 1198 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, pp. 245-6). Two conjoint leaves of wove paper (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ pp. written), 278×219 mm. *Begins and ends as follows*: So my beloved boasts that she is more perfect | in the practice than I in the theory of love? | ... Goodnight my excellent love | my own Mary. | P. B. Shelley.

De Ricci (pp. 245-6) was wrong to identify this letter with lot 729 in the sale of December 18, 1848. The latter is in fact No. 3 above. The genuine letter from which lot 1198 was copied is now in the Bodleian as MS. Shelley C. i, ff. 122-3 (De Ricci, p. 236). It was printed by Ingpen, vol. IX, no. CCXLVII, pp. 108-9.

11 (ff. 20-22). Lot 1199 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 246). Two conjoint leaves and one single leaf of wove paper (5 pp. written), 276×223 mm. Apollo seal in black wax. Postmarked January 11, 1817. *Begins and ends as follows*: London, Jan. 11. 1816. | My dear love | I will relate to you all that I have learned & | all that has happened first. | I saw Longdill early this morning ... So adieu—you shall hear by the mail tomorrow | night if possible. | your own affectionate Shelley | I've lost the list—send it again, & I'll send by the coach— | Don't be disappointed

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if I send not by the Mail—May be | I can't.—The Hunts send their love. | Mrs. Shelley | 12. New Bond St. | Bath.

Dr. R. W. Hunt, Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, has kindly informed me that the genuine original on which lot 1199 is based was presented to the Bodleian by Sir John Shelley-Rolls in 1946 and is now MS. Shelley adds. b.2, ff. 85-7. The letter is printed by Ingpen, as two separate letters, in vol. IX, nos. CCCXIII (pp. 215-17) and CCCXIV (pp. 217-18). Dr. Hunt adds that Major Byron forgeries corresponding to Ingpen's two parts (De Ricci, p. 239) were given to the Bodleian by Lady Shelley in 1892 and are now in MS. Shelley C. I as ff. 168-9 (quarto) and ff. 139-40 (octavo). The second of the two parts begins with the words 'Yet cheer up my own beloved Mary', which begin f. 87 in MS. Shelley adds. b.2. At the corresponding point (f. 21v) in our No. 11, Lady Shelley has written: 'The original letter ends here and bears no signature. J.S.' The confusion perhaps originated with Major Byron, who sold the original letter to Mary Shelley and numbered f. 85 as No. 15A and f. 87 as No. 15B, possibly to pass off one letter for the price of two. Another forgery of this letter is No. 16 below. See Ehrsam, pp. 129-34 for a discussion of this letter, and pp. 59, 123 for references to the Major's numbering of the genuine letters which he obtained at Marlow.

12 (ff. 23-24). Lot 1200 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 246). Two separate leaves of wove paper ($2\frac{1}{2}$ pp. written), 242×202 mm. Armorial seal in dark red wax. *Begins and ends as follows*: London, Dec. 12, 1816. | Why art thou absent, dearest to my heart, while | languid hours fill up the time appointed for existence, | . . . but I will en | deavour to catch the coach. Blessings to fair babe! | and adieu, my ever dear Mary!— | P. B. Shelley. | Mrs. Shelley | 12 New Bond Str | Bath.

13 (ff. 25-26). Lot 1202 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 246). Two conjoint leaves ($3\frac{1}{2}$ pp. written), 243×193 mm., watermarked with a fleur de lys. Armorial seal in dark red wax. Postmarked January 14 (?) 1817. *Begins and ends as follows*: London, Jany 13. 1817 | My sweetest Mary, Oppression is deemed no | injustice towards some individuals. You must | own that my case . . . Farewell my own sweet | Mary—& kiss baby's blue eyes— | P.B. Shelley | Mrs. Shelley. | 12 New Bond St. | Bath. |

14 (ff. 27-28). Lot 1203 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, p. 246). Two conjoint leaves of wove paper ($2\frac{3}{4}$ pp. written), 262×207 mm. Armorial seal in black wax. Postmarked January 12, 1818. *Begins and ends as follows*: London. Monday. | My sweetest and only love | The anxiety which I have | suffered for the last two days has been very great. | . . . as I have an appointment with | Longdill. Good bye my own dear love— | P. B. Shelley | Mrs. Shelley. | Gt. Marlow | Bucks.

Of these items from the 1851 sale only Nos. 10 and 11 seem to be copied from genuine originals. I have not tried to trace the sources upon which Major Byron based the texts of the remainder. Mr. Andreas Mayor has pointed out that the Major's imitations tend to be more convincing when he had a genuine letter in front of him¹³, and the observation seems to be justified in this case.

As to seals, a good impression of the Apollo seal used here may be seen in Add. MS. 19377, f. 108v. The armorial seal used here agrees with the smaller of the two used in Add. 19377, for example at f. 137v (for the larger see f. 125v); it is only a rough approximation to what Shelley was entitled to; the crest is more or less correct, but there are supporters, and the arms themselves are always carefully effaced. The crest used by itself in Add. 19377, f. 145v is certainly incorrect.

Like most of the Shelley and Byron letters in Add. 19377, our Nos. 5-14 all show, in the form of brown stains, traces of having been dabbed with some liquid in the area of the writing¹⁴. While cataloguing the Shelley letters for the 1851 sale Samuel Leigh Sotheby observed not only that they 'presented a great sameness in respect to the colour of the ink', but that 'all the letters were remarkably and unusually clean. These circumstances, I thought, might arise from their having been probably wetted, and then pressed; an opinion somewhat induced by the unfavourable time I devoted to their examination, it being always of an evening, by candlelight'¹⁵.

The reader will have noticed that lot 1201 in the 1851 sale is not present here. It was given to the Bodleian by Lady Shelley in 1892 as an original. The complicated story of how the corresponding original came into the hands of Spencer Shelley and then entered the collection of T. J. Wise is too long to tell here¹⁶. No. 15 is a copy by Spencer Shelley of that original.

No. 15; copy of B.M. Ashley MS. 5021.

15 (ff. 29-30). Copy, on two conjoint leaves of wove paper, 229×187 mm., in the handwriting of Spencer Shelley, of the Treasury (cf. his letter to W. E. Gladstone, March 7, 1854, in B.M., Add. MS. 44378, f. 48), of the genuine letter of December 15, 1816, which is now B.M., Ashley MS. 5021 (De Ricci, pp. 237-8). It is printed by Ingpen, vol. IX, no. CCCXI, pp. 211-13. Our copy is inscribed at the end by Lady Shelley: 'This sent to us by Spencer Shelley—the letter he possesses being a forgery'. The forged version which was lot 1201 in the 1851 sale (De Ricci, pp. 246, 238) is now in the Bodleian as MS. Shelley C. i, ff. 135-8.

¹³ Andreas Mayor, 'A Suspected Shelley Letter', *The Library*, 5th ser., iv (1949-50), pp. 141-5.

¹⁴ In No. 14 the stains are scarcely visible except on f. 28v; in the rest they are obvious.

¹⁵ Quoted by Ehrensam, p. 77, from *Principia Typographica* (1858), vol. II, p. 105. Cf. a contemporary reference to 'mildewed paper' quoted by Ehrensam, p. 90.

¹⁶ Ehrensam, pp. 116-28, and Mayor's paper cited in n. 13 above.

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The last forgery in this collection, No. 16, is another version of No. 11 above (lot 1199 in the 1851 sale).

No. 16, a forgery 'bought through Hookham'

16 (ff. 31-33). Two conjoint leaves and one single leaf (5½ pp. written), 239 × 190 mm., watermarked with a fleur-de-lys. Armorial (?) seal in red wax. Postmarked January 11, 1817. This begins like No. 11 above, although somebody has changed '1816' to '1817' in the date, but ends as follows: . . . So adieu—Kiss sweetest babe tenderly for me. How do his fair blue eyes look today?—Your own affectionate Shelley. Don't be disappointed if I don't write by the mail tomorrow—May be, I can't. Give my love to poor Clare and read or tell her the substance of this letter. (Direction as in No. 11.)

Lady Shelley has marked the words 'Yet cheer up my own beloved Mary' (f. 33) as in No. 11. Sir Percy Shelley, writing in ink over an inscription in pencil to the same effect, has noted on f. 31: 'Bought through Hookham of a Mr. Byron who gave his address & name as "Memoirs" Woolwich. P.F.S.' To this he added 'in 1851' at the beginning. But for this date, one might have supposed that No. 16 was one of the forgeries sold by the Major to Mary Shelley through Thomas Hookham, jnr., since the pseudonym 'Memoir' was used in those transactions¹⁷.

The remainder of this collection consists of wrappers and notes.

Nos. 17-20, wrappers, etc.

17 (f. 34). Copies, in the handwriting of Charles Withall, of the inscriptions by Lady Shelley on four wrappers, the last three of which are Nos. 18-20 below. The verso of this leaf contains the end of a draft will of Lady Shelley's, dated October 23, 1852.

18-20 (ff. 35-38, 39-42, 43-44). Wrappers, with inscriptions by Lady Shelley, which originally held lots 1199, 1195 and 1197 for the 1851 sale.

Lady Shelley's annotations on some of the letters themselves, and on the wrappers that accompany them, show that sooner or later she and her advisers recognized them all for the forgeries they are, although enough has been said above to indicate that she was capable to the end of failing to distinguish the Major's hand from her father-in-law's own. It is hard, after a century, to understand the Major's success; but it was great in his own day, and we must be thankful that this important group of his productions has found its way into custody.

¹⁷ Ehrsam, pp. 27-9, 43.

make public the "strong evidence" he had found of Harriet's suffering over the separation in which Garnett represented her as "acquiescing." Garnett drew a distinction between "acquiescence" and "consent." Imperceptibly Garnett's influence gained upon Dowden and he came to believe that Harriet must have ceased to love Shelley; and in any case her nature was not capable of deep emotion.

It was of importance to both Dowden and Garnett to believe this. Neither could excuse Shelley if he had left Harriet because he was in love with Mary. They scrutinized dates and struggled with the calendar in order to make the sequence of events in 1814 such as to exonerate Shelley from blame. Either Shelley was at fault or he was not. He was not; therefore he had not left Harriet because he was in love with Mary but he had fallen in love with Mary because Harriet had left him. Harriet had ceased to love Shelley; the marriage had not been a true union for at least two months. With this neat bit of casuistry they arranged the facts to their satisfaction. Neither Garnett nor Dowden comforted himself with the ingenious argument developed by Mrs. Marshall, who was at this time writing her *Life of Mary Shelley*. Mrs. Marshall put the full blame of the elopement upon Harriet, who, knowing of the planned flight, took no steps to prevent it, and did not pursue the elopers.

In spite of their mutual reassurances Garnett and Dowden were still seeking conviction years later. In 1905 the two elderly gentlemen were wondering if the real cause of the separation could not be deduced from Hogg's sneering reference to Harriet's rosy complexion. Intemperance now seemed to be a probable cause, induced by the vegetarian diet in which Shelley believed, one unsuitable for a young woman brought up on a more ample diet.

The villain in Shelley biography is not an individual; Hogg's vanity, Lady Shelley's devotion to Mary, Garnett's devotion to Lady Shelley, Jeaffreson's eagerness to unveil a romantic hero, all have played their parts; but the villain is Victorian morality. Both Dowden and Garnett were victims of the idea that action must always be judged as good or bad; that people must be labelled good or bad. It was wrong for a man to desert his wife; Shelley was not a bad man and therefore he could not have deserted his wife. Years before, when Dowden had been editing Southey's letters, Garnett had interpreted for him a statement of Shelley's to Southey:

"Shelley assuredly meant that he might... have kept up appearances with his wife and indulged in an illicit connection—like Wellington and Nelson for example—and then the world would not have quarrelled with him."

Dowden in sending his book to the grandson of Shelley and Harriet obviously hoped that no one would quarrel with him as a "presenter of facts."

LOUISE SCHUTZ BOAS. "Page 201, where they correspond to the printed versions of Scene I, lines 2, 3 and 27)—the change of rough to wild, perfumed to odorous and nothing I know (in a metrically defective line) to not anything. But the crowning naivety of the forger comes with his attempt to interpolate a little Greek. What he does interpolate is, indeed, a series of Greek characters penned in a tolerable imitation of Shelley's Greek script; they do not, however, amount

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Some time ago my attention was drawn by Dr. R. W. Hunt, Keeper of Western Manuscripts at Bodleian Library, to a note purporting to contain an autograph version of Shelley's translation of

Letters to the Editor

DOWDEN'S LIFE OF SHELLEY

Sir,—A somewhat stiff, self-conscious letter, written in November, 1886, to Mr. William Esdaile, grandson of Shelley, recently came to my attention, through the courtesy of Shelley's great-granddaughter:

"My dear Sir,

"I have the pleasure of telling my publisher to send you a copy of my *Life of Shelley* immediately on publication. Should it not reach you soon, please let me know. I have endeavoured to suppress myself as far as possible, and to become a presenter of facts as far as I have been able to gather them. Faithfully yours,
Edward Dowden."

Dowden had had a difficult course to steer. Invited by Sir Percy and Lady Shelley to write the *Life* "from the materials in Lady Shelley's privately printed volumes," he had agreed to consult closely with Richard Garnett "as to what form the book ought to take, and in what way the materials ought to be treated." He was not unaware of Garnett's complete accord with Lady Shelley, but he was trying to convey to the grandson of Harriet, the first wife, that he had not been influenced in his presentation of facts by the son and daughter-in-law of Mary, the second wife. That he had been influenced by Garnett is amply made clear by a study of the letters exchanged between the two men (*Letters About Shelley*, London, 1917). A study of this exchange of letters throws light upon a gradual infiltration of Garnett's bias, so that one finds the name of Harriet Shelley excluded from the index of the published *Life*; to find a reference to Harriet one must consult the index for her maiden name, Westbrook. In the *Letters About Shelley* (edited by Garnett's son) the index also knows no Harriet Shelley, only Harriet Westbrook.

Difficulties had arisen between Dowden and the Shelleys when he came to deal with the separation of Shelley and Harriet, and it became necessary for Garnett to act as mediator; Dowden readily admitted the desirability of their having a common point of view; and agreed, too, on the importance of the separation "as a central point" in Shelley's life, "one which must go far to determine our estimate of his character." Dowden knew Lady Shelley's version, written by her on the fly-leaves of the privately printed volumes *Shelley and Mary* containing the letters and documents in Sir Percy's possession. Dowden was not ready to accept this version in which, he felt, conjectures had come to be accepted as facts. Garnett's letters at this time of stress between the Shelleys and Dowden are masterpieces of persuasion; he took care to agree with Dowden while suggesting a change of phrasing that would be less objectionable to the Shelleys. Cleverly Garnett undermined Harriet's position by admitting that there was no positive proof for certain allegations—but absence of proof did not say that there might not be truth in them. Gradually Dowden gave ground; he might be mistaken in some of his opinions; if Sir Percy could provide factual evidence or a different interpretation he would alter some of his statements. He would not

NOTEBOOK

to any sort of representation of the Greek language.

Pasted among the remaining sheets of the notebook are various memoranda on antiquities intended, it would seem, to give the impression that after passing out of Shelley's possession it was used as a scrapbook by some nineteenth-century connoisseur. The likelihood is that they were inserted by the forger. His identity is unknown but he was evidently one of those pests who were responsible for so much bogus Shelley material in the middle 1920s: an account of their activities is given on pages 297-300 of that unsatisfactory but often informative book *The Shelley Legend*. Of the history of the notebook nothing seems to be known except that it was formerly in the hands of one Beccles Wilson; from him it passed about 1926 to the late Mr. Myers, who preserved it as a curiosity. I write these notes in the hope that by adding a little to the general knowledge of the past ways of roguery they may contribute a little towards a salutary future wariness.

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POETRY

ROBERT LANGBAUM: *The Poetry of*
A. F. SCOTT: *The Poet's Craft*. Ca

Twenty years ago the breach between the modern poets and the Victorians was felt to be at least as significant as that between the Romantics and the Augustans. In recent years we have seen several attempts to interpret modern poetry as a late phase of the Romantic tradition. Mr. Langbaum is one of those for whom, in a wider and more philosophical view, the distinction between twentieth-century and nineteenth-century poetry is coming to seem rather less important.

For him the main watershed is the Enlightenment, and the important new start that of the Romantics. With them, he holds, there began a new poetry of experience, empirical and relative in that it could no longer rely on a universal world-view and accepted values. This formulation uncovers the essential element common to both Romanticism and the later reactions against it, the principle underlying all poetry since the Enlightenment: "the doctrine that the imaginative apprehension gained through immediate experience is primary and certain, whereas the analytic reflection that follows is secondary and problematical." The poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, "constructed upon the deliberate disequilibrium between experience and idea," makes its statement "not as an idea but as an experience from which one or more ideas can be abstracted as problematical rationalizations." Furthermore, this "poetry of experience" has developed its distinctive forms, of which the dramatic monologue is the most typical and characteristic example.

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17 (f. 34). Copies, in the handwriting of Char Lady Shelley on four wrappers, the last three The verso of this leaf contains the end of a di October 23, 1852.

18-20 (ff. 35-38, 39-42, 43-44). Wrappers, w which originally held lots 1199, 1195 and 1197

Lady Shelley's annotations on some of the wrappers that accompany them, show that so recognized them all for the forgeries they are, above to indicate that she was capable to the Major's hand from her father-in-law's own. It stand the Major's success; but it was great in his that this important group of his productions

¹⁷ Ehram, pp. 27-9, 43.

AL BULLETIN

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between our sympathy and our moral judgment of the speaker, but he does nothing to remove the feeling that Browning sometimes blurs the issues and tries to have it both ways. Again, when a comparison of Browning and Eliot as writers of dramatic monologues leaves the stress on the likeness, surely something important has been lost sight of.

The terms of this discussion leave no room to meet the objection that Browning's preoccupation with varied life and experience (Arnold's "multitudinousness") lacks something in fineness of sensibility and intelligence, and that he rarely attained the deeper and more disinterested seriousness of "Two in the Campagna." In fact Mr. Langbaum pays altogether too little

AGAMEMN

GEORGE E. MYLONAS: *Ancient Mycenae*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 45s.

This book discusses in turn the walls, the palace, the houses and the grave-circles of Mycenae, and the objects found in the long series of excavations from the time when the Greek Archaeological Society cleared the Lion Gate in 1840 to their exploration of the second Grave Circle in 1952, when Professor Mylonas himself took part. Every now and then the excitement of the excavator breaks through, but this is on the whole a sober account of the excavations carried on in different parts of the site, taken in chronological order. Full tribute is paid to the work of Professor Wace, whose excavations have been continuing with interruptions since 1920. The illustrations are almost entirely architectural except for the rich grave furniture of the second Grave Circle; it is useful to have the new things well illustrated but a general book on Mycenae should have included pictures of the earlier finds, although they are well known, and the ivories from the houses excavated by Dr. Wace.

The text includes many interesting interpretations and conjectures. The lions of the Lion Gate are interpreted as the badge of the royal family (the closer equation with the Pelopids as Easterners seems dubious). The porter's lodge has become a dog kennel, but a kennel six feet long by six feet deep seems excessive even for a Mycenaean dog. What had previously been interpreted as the throne room is now regarded as a hostel for guests with an adjoining bathroom, and the throne is put in the main room with its frescoes. Dr. Wace's shrine, near which he found the ivory group of two women and a

2 1822

A FORGED SHELLEY NOTEBOOK

By NEVILLE ROGERS

Some time ago my attention was drawn by Dr. R. W. Hunt, Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, to a notebook purporting to contain an autograph version of Shelley's translations from Calderón's *El mágico prodigioso*. Since then it has been placed in my hands for further examination by its present owner, Miss Winifred Myers, of the well-known Bond Street firm, and I am now able to describe it.

The volume measures 7½ in. by 5 in. and has been bound at some comparatively modern date in plain, light-brown boards which are loosely covered with a rough jacket of flowered silk. It is contained in a handsome dark-brown leather pull-off case by Zaehnsdorf, which has been so made as to stand upon a shelf as a book does, and bears on its "spine" the gold-lettered title and description "MAGICO/PRODIGIOSO," "P. B. SHELLEY/MS/PISA 1822." Whether by accident or design this pull-off case is suggestive of somewhat similar cases that contain Shelley's notebooks in the Bodleian. No records have been preserved by Messrs. Zaehnsdorf which refer to the work or might identify their client. Written in ink upon the fly-leaf is a putative signature. "P. B. Shelley/Pisa 1822." Below, in pencil, somebody has thoughtfully written "Note:—the paper is watermarked 1821." The figures "1821" are indeed discernible in the paper but, as was at once pointed out to me by the authorities of the Birmingham University Library, they are not a watermark but a trademark, and one still in use. A scientific test of the paper in the laboratory of the British Museum proved inconclusive, the composition being of rag which could equally well be modern or otherwise. The alleged Shelley manuscript has been written in ink in a very creditable imitation of the poet's hand. It consists of a dozen pages only. At first sight these display most of the normal characteristics of a Shelley notebook: the numerous corrections, the changes of ink, the occasional pen-sketch, the snatches of quotation in a foreign language. We notice in passing that the changes of ink seem a trifle deliberate, that the drawings have a most un-Shelleyan stiffness and lack of fluency, and that the quotations, all except one, are in Spanish and are copied, apparently at

random, from the text of the passages that are being translated, a slightly odd proceeding on the part of a translator.

A closer look at the corrections gives still further reason for suspicion. Shelley's normal corrections, as I have demonstrated in this *Literary Supplement* and elsewhere, are remarkable for the way in which, step by step, they advance the poetical evolution of a passage: here, however, all the corrections are trivial and without significance. Three examples will be enough (cp. Hutchinson's Oxford Shelley, page 821, where they correspond to the printed versions of Scene I, lines 2, 3 and 27)—the change of *rough* to *wild*, *perfumed* to *odorous* and *nothing I know* (in a metrically defective line) to *not anything*. But the crowning naivety of the forger comes with his attempt to interpolate a little Greek. What he does interpolate is, indeed, a series of Greek characters penned in a tolerable imitation of Shelley's Greek script; they do not, however, amount

to any sort of representation of the Greek language.

Pasted among the remaining sheets of the notebook are various memoranda on antiquities intended, it would seem, to give the impression that after passing out of Shelley's possession it was used as a scrapbook by some nineteenth-century connoisseur. The likelihood is that they were inserted by the forger. His identity is unknown but he was evidently one of those pests who were responsible for so much bogus Shelley material in the middle 1920s: an account of their activities is given on pages 297-300 of that unsatisfactory but often informative book *The Shelley Legend*. Of the history of the notebook nothing seems to be known except that it was formerly in the hands of one Beccles Wilson; from him it passed about 1926 to the late Mr. Myers, who preserved it as a curiosity. I write these notes in the hope that by adding a little to the general knowledge of the past ways of roguery they may contribute a little towards a salutary future wariness.

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Sept 1822

have written highly coloured accounts of their experiences. Modestly disclaiming the role of crusader, Mr. Stokes confines himself to factual records of what he saw during a wide tour for which he was given ample facilities. His book is a fascinating human story and a valuable explanation of how the taxpayer's money (and little enough of it) is spent in trying to help the criminal to change his outlook on life. Mr. Stokes is no sentimentalist and is not afraid to expose administrative weaknesses, but he gives full credit to the prison officers who realize that a person is "sent to prison as a punishment, not to be punished." Even the habitual criminal sentenced to preventive detention as being a danger to society, though subject to firm discipline, is not treated as an incurable moral leper. The book is an impressive commentary on the present disturbing increase in crime.

Taine's Notes on England. Translated with an Introduction by Edward Hyams. 9x6. xxxi, 296pp. Thames and Hudson, 25s. Reviewed on page 692.

Theatre and Entertainment

HOBSON, HAROLD. *International Theatre Annual, No. 2.* Introduc-

17 (f. 34). Copies, in the handwriting of Char Lady Shelley on four wrappers, the last three The verso of this leaf contains the end of a di October 23, 1852.

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17 Ehksam, pp. 27-9, 43.

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N.516 The Times, E.C.4.

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Hutchinson ..	vii	The ..	v

the two other women with whom Charles had had emotional entanglements, Maria Beadnell and Ellen Ternan, having remained on amiable terms, at appropriate levels, with all three. She died, at the age of 90, in 1917, after having for nearly half a century sought to control the flood of posthumous Dickensiana. This she did with excellent sense and taste, encouraging here, deprecating or suppressing there; but as Victorian reticence went progressively out of fashion hers was a progressively losing battle. Mr. Adrian's 120,000-word book is her ultimate defeat.

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A FORGED SHELLEY NOTEBOOK

Sir,—Messrs. Dulau also bought from
Beckles Wilson a forged notebook of
Shelley's containing drafts of poems
purporting to have been written while
he was an undergraduate; several letters
supposed to have been written while he
was in Ireland; and some corrected proofs
of poems by him.

These were shown to T. J. Wise, who
pronounced them genuine. The late
Roger Ingpen proved the letters to be
forged and further investigation exposed
the fallibility of the other pieces.

All the material was still in Dulau's
possession when their premises were
destroyed by enemy action.

PERCY G. MUIR.

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Oct. 8

"George Gordon De Luna Byron"
(1810-1882)

Self-advertised "legitimate" son of Byron the poet. Genuine letter, New York, 1849, defending his Byron forgeries. This "Major Byron" also forged Keats and Shelley letters and manuscripts.

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1821.

George Gordon
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James F. Drake, Inc.



New York, N. Y.



James F. Drake, Inc.



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Hutchinson ..	vii	Times Bookshop.	xxi
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FORGERY. Byron (George Gordon Noel, Lord). A.L.S.
1 page, 4to, ~~inlaid~~. Ravenna, Oct. 3, 1821.

A forgery by the so called Major George Gordon Byron, self proclaimed illegitimate son of the poet. It was Major Byron's habit to make a skillful use of genuine Byron letters, as he did in this one, by copying a part of the text of an original letter (Letters and Journals, Vol. 5, p. 485).

This forgery is listed in T. G. Ehrsam's "Major Byron, the Incredible Career of a Literary Forger", N.Y., 1951.

James F. Drake, Inc.



New York, N. Y.

James F. Drake, Inc.



New York, N. Y.

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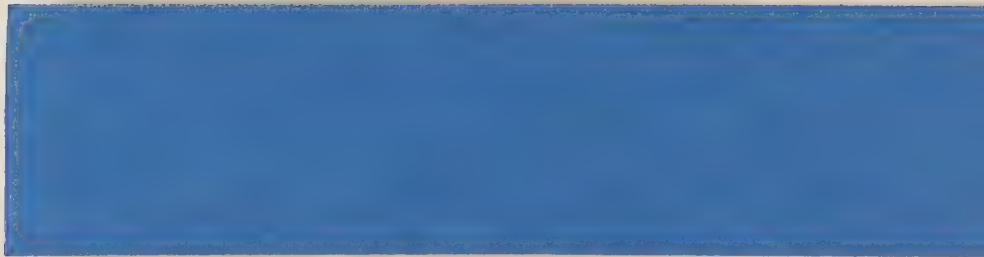
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A Lord Byron forgery by "Major Byron".
Loaned by Stuart B. Schimmel

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...claimed to be an illegitimate son of the George Gordon
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included Byron, Shelley and Keats letters. This
forgery is listed in Theodore G. Ehrsam's "Major
Byron, the Incredible Career of a Literary Forger",
N.Y., 1951.



FORGERY. Byron (George Gordon Noel, Lord). A.L.S.
"Biron". 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ pages, small 4to, inlaid. Genoa,
Nov. 28, 1922. To Sir Godfrey Webster.

A forgery by the so-called Major George Gordon Byron who claimed to be an illegitimate son of the poet. Major Byron's forgeries were extensive and included Byron, Shelley and Keats letters. This forgery is listed in Theodore G. Ehrsam's "Major Byron, the Incredible Career of a Literary Forger", N.Y., 1951.

James F. Drake, Inc.



New York, N. Y.

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AROLD.
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257 Broadway, New York,
Oct. 19th, 1849.

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge
the receipt of your letter of the
15th instant. — I shall most
cheerfully comply with your request.
— Permit me to add a few
remarks. — You seem, like
many others, to entertain some
doubts as to the authenticity ^{of the letters} of
your fears are perfectly ground-
less. The genuineness of the letters
of Dr. has never been doubted
in England, though I have perso-
nally been hounded by the
Athenaeum (the pretator I never
saw while in London), which
grandmotherly and most

impartial paper could not
omit the golden arguments
of John Murray, Esq. of
Albemarle Street, nor those of
the legal firm (see Athenaeum,
I forgot the name of the rascals)
who for the last 20 years have
done the dirty work of Sir
John (and Robt) House - who drag-
ged him through the East Indian
bribery business &c. &c. —
If the letters had not been genuine
an imputation of the Lord Cham-
cellor could have been obtained.
Glad I chosen to publish in
England, adding only the words
on the title page

Heinemann, ..	xxiv	Ward Lock ..	xxvii
William	x	Warne, Frederick	xxviii
Hodder and		World's Work ..	xxix
Stoughton	xx	Times Bookshop,	
Hutchinson ..	vii	The ..	v

1740Cms -
" attributed to Lord Byron "

I could have done so without
any hindrance: — The same
secret influence that was active
against me in London, is now
behind the scenes in New York.
I know the Agent of Wharney,
who has slandered me, writing
anonymous letters to different
editors of New York papers &c.
But shortly, the instant when
the trial of the "Evening Mirror"
comes on, I shall have it in my
power to unmask the man —
no reptile. — Lord Byron,
though accused of the foulest crimes
at one period — never defended
himself — I have adopted the

same tactics — my answer to
 the unscrupulous malignity of these
 fastidious gentry of the press is
 silence and contempt. But there
 is a point at which the desperate
 necessities of jaded journalists
 in want of paragraph — timber,
 should stop — Mr Fuller of the
 Mirror, I dare say, has found
 out that a word too much may
 have very unpleasant effects. —

In conclusion let me add that the
 work must speak for itself — it
 will prove its own authenticity.

I send you the short introduction
 as reprinted by the Evening Post.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours truly

Edward M. Byrne

Heinemann, ..	xxiv	Ward Lock ..	xxvii
William ..	x	Warne, Frederick ..	xxviii
Hodder and ..		World's Work ..	xxix
Stoughton ..	xx	Times Bookshop, ..	
Hutchinson ..	vii	The ..	v

John The Parker

Forged Byron Letters

Two letters skillfully forged
by "Major George Gordon Byron",
self-named "son" of George
Gordon, Lord Byron, the poet.
Signed "Byron" (1821) and
"Biron" (1822).



John says, that

fastidious gentry of the press is
not but then

will prove its own authenticity.
I send you the short introduction
as reprinted by the Evening Post.

Ex. 22 1887

Havana - Oct. 2^d - 1887 -

Dear Sir -

I open the packet in order to ask
a few lines - Have you published these
plays in one volume? - that will be
the best way - The "prospect" you
must publish as literature decided - but
whether with or without the prose
I leave to your pleasure - - As
Liston says, that "is all optional
you know -

Yrs &c

P. M. M.

have written high
of their experien

Exeter - Nov. 28 - 1882

My dear Webster

I most sincerely thank you for the kind interest you are good enough to take in the reports of the state of my health. I wish it was in my power to say that those reports were not only exaggerated but altogether unfounded - The fact is I have been suffering from a slow fever which has somewhat weakened me - but as I am my own physician I need not be apprehensive of troubling old Plummer to ferry me across the Styx - I could not help laughing at your debatable story - Your vigorous friend reminds me of the

Following quaint passage in a very old copy
of a work on necromancy = Question: "How
to raise a devil?" Answer: "Contradict
your wife" — I have had some ex-
perience which has convinced me of the
probatum est — He is no beauty, but as
lame as myself, still he artfully to find
a spare rib now and then — besides his
legitimate one — what a comfort to a
cripple! He is evidently a practical man
— and I have scarcely heard a single
word to his dispraise — although he has
never gone out of his way to court

Murphy George Gordon 6th Baron

The sweet voices of the multitudes -
My horses are waiting — the simple
multitudinous service —

Birds

Venice - Nov 25th 1810.

My dear Sir -

Many thanks for your
kind note - Believe me I am truly grateful
for attention so little deserved - You had no
reason to be apprehensive that I should be
displeased at your offer. - The remarks you
make at the bottom of your letter cannot
be more pertinent - We are all heirs to
misfortune & disappointments - but poets
especially seem to be a marked race - who
has not heard of the blindness of Milton -
the wretched life - and still more unhappy death
of Blayney - the long sufferings & unrequited

services of Cowley and of Butler —
the struggles against poverty & malice
which occupied the life of Dryden —
the constitutional infirmities which em-
-bittered the existence of Pope —
the lamentable idiocy & madness of
Swift — the almost unparalleled mis-
-eries and unhappy end of Savage —
the frenzy of Gallus — the indigence
of Goldsmith — the morbid melancholy
and sullen discontent of Johnson —
the hypochondriacism of Gray and
of Bentley — the tragical catastrophe

London
Anglican -

of Shatterton — the disappointed
Lopes and premature death of
Rurus — and the sickness — dependence
— and madness of Couper ? —

To this deplorable list many additions
might be made — — — Let me offer
my most sincere wishes for your health
and happiness — and allow me still
to subscribe myself

yours most sincerely

Bryce

